

17 July 1976

CIA burglarized Americans abroad

Washington (AP)—The Central Intelligence Agency gained information about certain Americans living abroad through burglaries at their homes or offices, CIA director George Bush said in an affidavit made public yesterday.

It was not clear from the affidavit whether CIA agents themselves conducted the burglaries. A spokesman for the agency declined comment, saying that it would be improper for him to elaborate on Mr. Bush's statement.

Mr. Bush's sworn statement was filed in United States District Court in New York in connection with the Socialist Workers party's multimillion-dollar lawsuit against the government intelligence agencies. The party seeks damages for allegedly illegal harassment of political activities.

The party's presidential candidate, Peter Camejo, criticized intelligence-gathering tactics.

"American citizens don't forfeit their constitutional rights when they cross the borders of the United States," he said. "These actions by the CIA are absolutely illegal."

The Political Rights Defense Fund, which is financing the party's lawsuit, released the Bush affidavit and said it shows that CIA agents "burglarized the apartments of American citizens living abroad and may be continuing to do so."

In the affidavit July 1, Mr. Bush said CIA files show that information "was acquired as a result of several surreptitious entries that were made into premises abroad as to which certain [party members] had regular access or may have had a proprietary interest."

Mr. Bush added, agency files "do contain information indicating that conversations of certain [party members] were overheard by means of electronic surveillance conducted abroad."

Mr. Bush provided no other details about the number and date of the burglaries and wiretapping.

He did not specifically state whether agents conducted the operations.

But he said CIA files "do not contain any information indicating that [the party and its members] have been the subject of electronic surveillance conducted by the CIA in the United States."

The defense fund said Mr. Bush's refusal to specify dates of the burglaries and wiretapping "raises the likelihood of very recent or continuing use of these tactics."

Party officials believe that "if these methods had been discontinued some time ago, this information probably would have been included in the affidavit," the defense fund statement said.

The CIA is fighting efforts by party attorneys to obtain details of the burglaries and wiretapping.

In the affidavit, Mr. Bush said he submitted a second statement, classified top secret, providing more information about the break-ins and electronic surveillance and arguing that the material includes state secrets that are exempt from disclosure.

Mr. Bush's second affidavit was submitted for the judge's private perusal.

CIA 1-01 Bush, George
Camejo, Peter